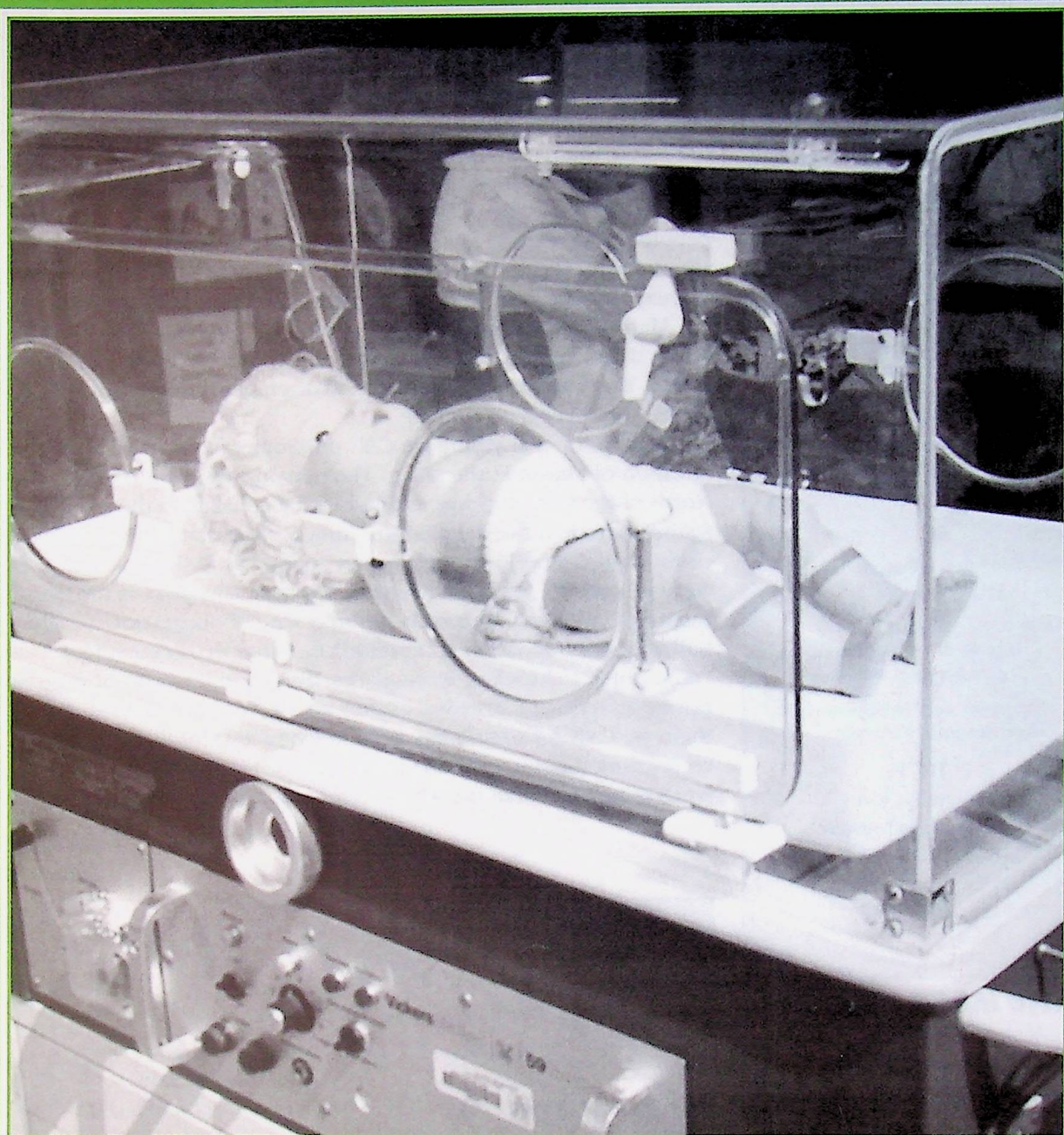


point three

September 1996



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THE MAGAZINE OF



TOC H

point three

TOC H is a Movement of people who seek to build friendships and offer service across the barriers that usually divide us from one another. The basic unit is a group – at best a good cross-section of the local neighbourhood – which meets together regularly, and seeks to serve the community around it.

TOC H was founded in 1915 by the Rev PB 'Tubby' Clayton, and since then has been providing opportunities for people to test the Christian way by practical experiment.

This magazine is a forum for ideas about TOC H and about the world, as well as a record of TOC H service. Its title derives from the Third Point of the TOC H compass, which asks us 'to think fairly'. Letters, articles and news items are welcomed and should be addressed to The Editor, *Point three*, at the address below.

Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the TOC H Movement.

Point three is available from TOC H at the address below at 80p per issue, (Free to Members and Builders).

Acting Editor:

John Mitchell

Cover:

The Wyre Forest 'Baby'
(see pages 8 and 9)

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environmentally friendly

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THE MAGAZINE OF



TOC H

Reg. Charity No. 211042

TOC H brings together people of different ages, viewpoints, races and faiths in mutual understanding. We base all our work on our Christian principles.

What can WE do?

There may be people who are persuaded that the recent decision by the Chief Constable of the RUC (to allow the Orange march to proceed in Portadown) was, indeed, an 'operational' decision. Sadly, I am not one of them. I cannot believe that the fact that the Government's survival depends on Unionist support did not, in some way, have its influence.

I may be accused of being cynical about politicians. I do try not to be, but it is difficult to retain one's confidence after events such as the Scott report. It begins to feel as if some scepticism about politicians' postures is the mark of maturity, rather than the sign of a suspicious nature.

Even if I am wrong about the Portadown decision, it is undeniable that we have witnessed one of the most damaging U-turns of law and order this country has seen for years, and it is deeply worrying. And that on top of the renewed violence at Canary Wharf and in Manchester. Just what ordinary folk in Northern Ireland (and I include people in the security forces) must be feeling doesn't bear thinking about. Our sympathy goes to all those who rejoiced in the growing chance of peace, and who must now feel 'gutted'...and terrified.

Many people are working to try and bring reconciliation. We salute them, support them in spirit, and hope that more may be added. But for most of us a direct involvement is not possible, even if we had the necessary courage.

Is there then anything we CAN do? Someone once asked that question of Martin Luther King. The person was in Detroit, in the North of the USA, and was asking how he could help the struggle against racism in the deep South. King replied that the best thing they could do to help the struggle in the South was to fight discrimination 'here in Detroit'. He explained that 'Injustice anywhere is the enemy of Justice everywhere'. The same is surely true of oppression and bullying, discrimination and prejudice. These we do meet in our own communities, churches, work-places, even families - even if they may not be as stark and dreadful as they are in Northern Ireland. About them we CAN do something, both individually and through the reconciling mission of Toc H itself. If we really do, we can make a small contribution to the whole - and that includes Northern Ireland.

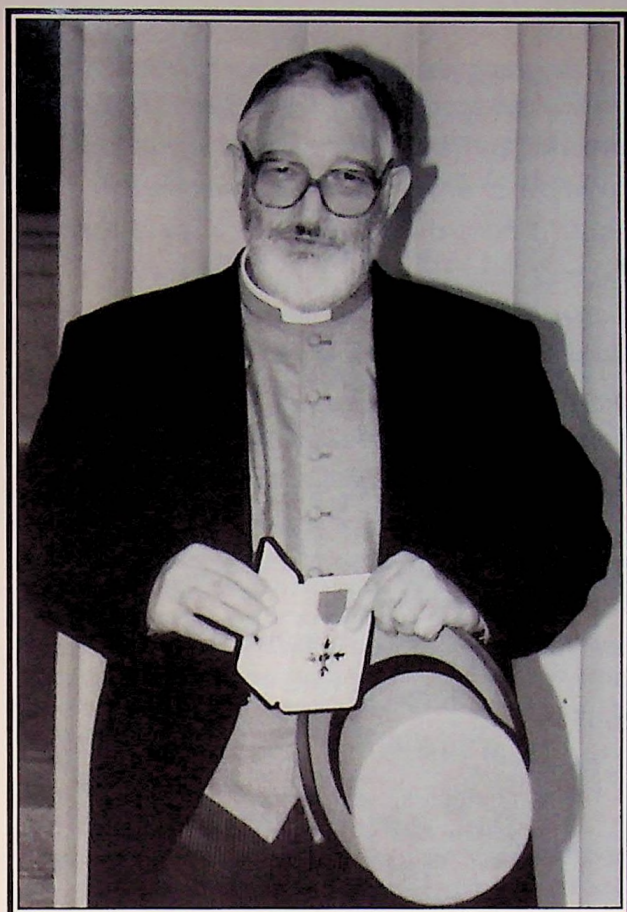
John Mitchell

Welcome

TO 21 NEW MEMBERS

- Beds and N. Herts, Georgina Morgan
- Bridlington, Eve Skinner, Samantha Tindall
- Broadway, Charles Gayton • Central Branch, Pam Johnson
- Crewkerne, David Cuthbertson, Rita Cuthbertson
- Halton, Paula Everett-Clay, Jane Roberts, Helen Wallis
- High Brooms, Vera Whyte
- Llandudno, Hilda Davies, Richard Gallie, Robert Jones
- Melton Mowbray, Nora Cullen, Gladys Smith
- Parkhurst, Audrey Kent • Poperinge, Veerle Verstraete
- Stony Stratford, Douglas Lewis, June Bowyer
- Winsford, Tina Griffiths

GUALTER, M.B.E.



Revd Gualter de Mello received the MBE in the Birthday Honours in June in recognition of his work in Hackney over the past 30 years. Ken Prideaux-Brune writes about a remarkable ministry, exercised throughout in close association with Toc H.

Gualter de Mello's 30 years in Hackney, from his work as warden of Toc H Mark III, to the founding of Friends Anonymous with its motto 'Any Problem Is No Problem', followed by his departure from the Toc H staff and later his return to Prideaux House, when a grant from the borough enabled him to buy the building from Toc H, is too long a story to tell here. The work done under his leadership has inevitably changed many times during those 30 years but the principles behind it, principles in large measure derived from Toc H, have remained the same.

In recent years the work of Prideaux House has largely been with elderly people, in response

to the changing demographics of Hackney. There is a flourishing lunch club, though Prideaux House sells itself short when it talks about it simply as a lunch club. What other lunch club starts with a 'happy hour', when members can chat informally over a drink? At what other lunch club do members sit down to the meal with any other guests, social workers, councillors or other supporters, who happen to be visiting the house that day? At what other lunch club are members encouraged to spend much of the afternoon at the house if they wish? And Prideaux House is not afraid to make demands of its members. Members of the lunch club put on a pantomime most years and in 1994 and 1995 they took this to Sweden and performed it both at the University of Gothenburg and in a shopping mall. Several of the cast were aged over 80, one was in a wheelchair, another blind.

When you come to Prideaux House you don't feel you are entering an institution but a place with an immediate atmosphere of welcome. Everyone is welcome, everyone is valued. And as a result you never know whom you will meet there. There will be doctors, television producers, local councillors, social workers, members of the police force, elderly people from the area, visitors from overseas, all ages, shapes and sizes of people somehow meeting and mingling quite naturally. The divisions which normally keep people in different compartments don't apply here. People are simply people, each with gifts to share and needs to be met.

At Gualter's heart is a profound Christian faith. But where so much of religion seems concerned to define who's in and who's out, or intent on creating and enforcing rules, Gualter's Christianity is completely inclusive. It's about welcoming people and valuing them. It's about caring for those in need. The story of Prideaux House, of Friends Anonymous (now known as the Community of Reconciliation and Fellowship), is a story of many people but it is above everything else the story of Gualter de Mello. It is his vision that has driven the work forward, his faith that has sustained it and his humour that has kept it human. The award of the MBE is well-merited recognition of a remarkable ministry.

THE BLASP

Every few years some event occurs which raises questions about the Blasphemy Law. A few years ago, unforgettably, it was the Muslim outrage about Salman Rushdie's 'The Satanic Verses'. Sometimes films generate debate, such as 'The Last Temptation of Christ' and, recently, 'Teresa of Avila' (with her erotic visions about Jesus).

Some feel the law against blasphemy is

outdated and should go. Some feel it should, on the contrary, be updated to protect other faiths. Some feel it should remain as it is. We asked three former members of staff, the Revd Colin Rudd, Ken Prideaux-Brune, and the Revd David Mayhew each to present one of these arguments (although none of them is completely entrenched in any one view). We are grateful to them for helping this exercise in Fairmindedness.

'Blasphemy is an indictable offence at common law consisting in a publication of contentious, reviling, scurrilous or ludicrous matter relating to God, Jesus Christ, the Bible, or the formularies of the Church of England

from Halsbury's Laws of England. (Butterworths, London, 1990)



Muslims protest at Rushdie's 'blasphemy'

PHENOMY LAW

END IT?

He has spoken blasphemy! What further need have we of witnesses? You yourselves have heard the blasphemy: what do you think? They all said that he was worthy to die.

Matt. 26. v65

The law against blasphemy has had a long and often bloody history, characterised by the condemnation of Jesus. In the Judeo-Christian tradition it has its roots in Jewish Law in the second of the Ten Commandments - *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain*. From the beginning it has been a most difficult law to administer. Severe penalties have, in the past, been attached to the breaking of any blasphemy laws - in Old Testament times it was death by stoning. By the time of Jesus, Roman law had put a stop to such barbaric practices and had substituted its own - crucifixion - from which there appears to have been little protection, at least in the face of the determination of powerful religious leaders. In puritanical and fundamentalist times it has been used as an instrument of repression of art, sculpture, writing and science, and to protect the power base of those in control. It has also, as in the case of Jesus, provided the excuse for authority to get rid of uncomfortable and inconvenient figures. In times of liberal thought, such as our own, the problems associated with blasphemy law are entirely different. It is now virtually impossible to police and enforce, and has been entirely inadequate to have had any effect on the production of books, plays and films which many Christians have found offensive. If a law was ever held in contempt, it is the law against blasphemy - held in contempt not just by the man in the street, but by the judiciary itself, for it is, as it stands, incapable of enforcement.

It seems clear that, if blasphemy is to be prevented,

then renewed and vigorous enforcement of a discredited law is not what will do it. Imposing fines or imprisonment for what we may call licence but which others will undoubtedly call freedom of speech will gain nothing but further contempt, for blasphemy is in its essence a religious issue, not a civil one. It may be considered entirely proper for any religion to have its own laws which underline the need for either love and respect for, or even fear of, God. As long as such religious laws are justly, humanely and wisely interpreted and enforced, they can help to express for members of a faith the central importance which God holds for them. But religion is not immune to injustice and cruelty, and we cannot afford to forget that in the hands of religious fanatics blasphemy law can, even in our own time, lead to a man living his life in hiding and fear, as Salman Rushdie has had to do for so long.

In the end there can be no substitute for teaching, example and experience. It is through teaching and example that we really learn about the special relationship in which we stand with God. It is only through our own direct experience of that relationship that we grow in our love for God. Where such good practice falls short, the civil law is wholly inadequate to enforce the love and respect for God which blasphemy law is, at its best, designed to promote. It is time to remove the law against blasphemy from the statute book, since its presence there is at best meaningless and at worst counter-productive.

Revd Colin Rudd

MAINTAIN IT?

Why not repeal the law against blasphemy? There are two key reasons in favour of repeal. To avoid hypocrisy we need to repeal a law that no longer reflects, if it ever did, the faith of the majority of the nation's citizens. To promote justice, Christianity, only one of many faiths within our multi-faith society, should no longer enjoy privileged protection. In the cause of justice, the blasphemy law should at least be reformed to punish blasphemy as defined by those of all faiths. Furthermore, why should God's name need protecting anyway? To put it bluntly: if He is the God He claims to be, then surely He is big enough to look after Himself. Jesus was crucified as a blasphemer, and took it patiently when he was reviled. He calls his followers to do the same, and demonstrate in their lives the truth of their faith in Him, not coerce others by force of law. Sound religion

encourages free speech, and willingly suffers the cost of criticism and, at times, abuse.

These arguments have force. However, I do not find them sufficient to justify a repeal of the law at this stage. Why?

Firstly, because I am not convinced that the majority of citizens are quite as dismissive of the Christian faith as sometimes appears. The astonishing poll-finding reported in the press at Easter that over 50% of the population believe - in keeping with orthodox Christian belief - that Jesus rose physically from the dead, is but one of many indicators of this. My own view is that in relation to God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - it is our experience and behaviour that need changing more than our law. If our society is to have any moral and spiritual coherence, and most would agree that this is desirable, then the

maintenance of our existing blasphemy laws will promote such coherence more than their repeal would. Furthermore, whilst acknowledging that one of the functions of law is to express society's beliefs and values, I believe law should pay due respect to continuity with former generations as well as seeking to reflect consensus amongst current ones.

Secondly, the problems of drafting a blasphemy law which does justice to all faiths are legion and probably insuperable. Qu'ranic teaching about Christ denies his divinity and crucifixion. Yet these beliefs, blasphemous to Muslims, are of course central to Christian faith. There are many convictions I share with friends and neighbours of different faiths, but our faiths are different and

irreconcilable at certain points. What people of many faiths do agree about is the moral and spiritual poverty of our nation, the need to recover a sense of the mystery and majesty of the God to whom we will all have to give account. This is not so much about God's protection - He can indeed 'look after Himself' - it is about ours. Law may well need to be extended to provide protection of vulnerable minorities from incitement to religious hatred or discrimination, but the extension of the blasphemy law to cover all faiths is not practicable. Every faith, as well as our nation, will be best served by retaining the current law. Above all, though, we each need more wholeheartedly to serve and honour God and one another.

Revd David Mayhew

EXTEND IT?

For many in the West, Islam has become the 'enemy'. We don't seem to be comfortable without having some other society to hate, and the fall of the 'evil empire' left the position vacant. Muslims are now routinely portrayed as narrow-minded bigots, fundamentalists and terrorists. The ghastly Oklahoma bombing was immediately and, it now appears, quite wrongly, ascribed to Muslim fundamentalists. The assumption, based on no evidence at all, was that only Muslims could have perpetrated such a dastardly crime.

This kind of stereotyping of 'the other' is always wrong and usually dangerous. Yes, there are Muslim fundamentalists just as there are Christian fundamentalists. Yes, there are Muslim terrorists just as there are other kinds of terrorists. But to brand all the millions of adherents of a major religion because of the activities of a few fanatics is simply stupid. To pretend that the Muslim countries of the Middle East, of the Indian sub-continent, and of the Far East, so profoundly different from one another, are one monolithic cultural and political bloc is nonsensical. And dangerous, because it may well persuade them to bury their differences in the face of a common enemy.

The creators of the marvellous Alhambra Palace, and the peaceful, water-filled Generalife Gardens in Granada were quite obviously people who came from a profoundly civilised culture. The people who taught medieval Europe the value of Greek classical literature were not bigoted or narrow-minded. From Islam we have received some of the world's most beautiful calligraphy; Arabic numerals, with all they have meant for the development of mathematics; and architecture which conveys a deep sense of peace and contemplation. Yet we persist in treating Muslims as backward and uncivilised fanatics.

This isn't just about far-off places of which we know little. Significant numbers of British citizens are Muslims - indeed there are more Muslims than Methodists in Britain today. Yet we in effect brand more than a million of our fellow citizens as fanatics, as fundamentalists, as potential terrorists. That's the context in which our ancient blasphemy laws should be considered.

In Britain in 1996 there are significant numbers of Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs as well as Muslims. Members of Christian churches, though numbering more than any of these other religious groups, are a very small percentage of the total population. Yet it is still illegal to blaspheme against Christianity but not against any of the other religions that make up our multicultural society. If we want to make all our citizens feel that they belong equally, that must surely be changed. If Christianity is to receive this protection from the law, then so, in justice, must all the other religious traditions.

Defining blasphemy, like defining obscenity, is not easy. What feels like blasphemy to one person may well be seen as rational criticism by another. That's why the law has rarely been used in this century. But difficulty is no good reason for abandoning it altogether. It is surely not beyond our legal minds to differentiate between reasoned criticism and vulgar abuse. It may be argued that our race relations legislation should cover the stirring up of religious hatred; but it doesn't. There are Muslims and Buddhists of Caucasian origin, just as there are Christians who are ethnically Asian or African. Blasphemy may sometimes spring out of racial prejudice but it doesn't necessarily do so.

Many Christians are profoundly shocked by abuse of Jesus. We should surely be sensitive to the fact that Muslims are just as shocked by abuse of the Prophet Mohammed. We cannot in logic claim the protection of the law for our own religion unless we are prepared to extend it to others. Like it or not, we live now in a multicultural, multi-religious country and that demands from all of us the traditional British virtues of tolerance and respect for the profoundest feelings of our fellow citizens. At a time when many want to treat Islam as the enemy, it is even more important that we state firmly and unequivocally that all British citizens, whether they are Christians or Muslims, Buddhists or Jews, Sikhs or Hindus, are equal before the law. Widening the scope of the blasphemy laws would be a transparent symbol of this; and such symbols are significant.

Ken Prideaux-Brune

THE BLASPHEMY LAW

LEARNING DIFFICULTY? - NO, IT WAS GREAT FUN TO LEARN!

At ten o'clock on Monday morning 17 June the River Stour at Christchurch was deserted and peaceful. The tide was nearly at high point, but just rising against the flow of the river so that even the water was still. The Rowing Club with its balcony curtains drawn, looked like a building with its eyes closed, asleep.

Soon that peace would be shattered. Within the hour five activity stations had been set up by members of the Toc H Atlantic Challenge group, just in time as two minibuses swung into the car park. Out spilled 28 children from Winchelsea School. Some a little nervous, not knowing quite what to expect, but not David as he threaded his way to the front, grinning from ear to ear. "Hey, are we going in the river?", he asked without formality. "Right now if you like", I replied as I hoisted him over my shoulder and ran towards the bank. As I heard the laughter behind me I knew that the ice had been broken.

The children were divided into five groups which moved round the five activities. Each activity represented a challenge and each completed challenge counted towards a THROWING-OUT-A-CHALLENGE certificate signed by Steve and Mark, our Atlantic rowers. The learning theme was about keeping healthy, fit and safe, and drew on Steve's and Mark's challenge. So they made and sampled food from dehydrated ration packs, made safe drinking water by purifying seawater, completed a circuit of rowing machine and other exercises, donned survival suits and life-jackets, and practised what to do in a fire.

Peace was restored for half an hour whilst lunch was taken under the willow trees. Young David managed to sit still and Katy came and put her arms around me for calm and comfort. Just as the lunch boxes and bags were being packed away, as if by magic a brand new shiny red fire engine rolled up and it wasn't long before someone found the switch for the siren. By the time everyone had tried using the hose, it was time for the boat trip down to the harbour and up the Avon and back.

How sad when a good time ends! But over the following days memories of river and rehydrated rations and fitness and fire safety were revived in

the classroom. And what's more we are going to do it again soon with another special school. The event had been possible as a result of the enthusiastic co-operation of many people: the staff of Winchelsea School, Christchurch Rowing Club, Christchurch Fire Station, Toc H Bournemouth Branch, Toc H Atlantic Challenge projects sub-Committee and by no means least the children. Thank-you to them for giving us adults a most enjoyable challenge.

Jim Simpson

YOUR OWN PERSONALISED RECORD OF A UNIQUE MOMENT IN THE HISTORY OF TOC H AND HUMAN ENDEAVOUR

At the end of their epic journey next year in the first-ever Atlantic Rowing Race, Mark Stubbs and Steve Isaacs could be sending you a postcard from Barbados. The Toc H Atlantic Challenge has commissioned a special postcard (pictured below) to commemorate the Toc H entry in the race and the events in the community which it has generated. Each one will be personally signed by Mark and Steve.

Please send the name and address you would like the postcard to be sent to (yourself, a friend or maybe a young member of your family) with a minimum of £2 to cover the cost of the postcard, the postage from Barbados and a little towards the expenses of the Toc H Atlantic Challenge. Postcard Department, Toc H Atlantic Challenge, 1 Burley Road, Upper Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH12 3DA.



Toc H Tapped a Very Rich Vein!

John A. Biggerstaff

How long is it since 84 units of Toc H turned out some 525 members and helpers at the same time and organised 66 events across the country? Probably never! But this is what many members and friends did around Saturday 8th June, the day chosen by Toc H to celebrate its long association with the National Blood Authority (which is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 1996) by recruiting blood donors.

Well, how did Toc H do? Very well. At least 5,509 names were passed onto the Regional Donor Collection Centres, each of which was pleased with the responses - large or small.

Members of Gloucester branch did their 'homework' by visiting the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital Blood Transfusion Department where they spoke with four people who were having transfusions and they learnt of someone there who had already received some 75 units of blood. Stories like this were repeated around the country.

In Southport two branch members who would have been helping to recruit volunteers were admitted to hospital requiring transfusions, one receiving some three and a half pints. And a Cheltenham member required a blood transfusion in April to counteract her angina. Meanwhile some of those who volunteered their names have already given their first blood and it is now flowing into the system. Even Toc H members are not immune from the need for transfusions!

Many reports received indicated that members enjoyed the opportunity to be out on the streets talking with the general public about becoming blood donors and explaining more about Toc H. Some 1,552 expressed an interest in learning more

about the work of Toc H, and members are now working out ways of getting in touch with them.

The newspaper coverage was very good, both before and after the event. The cuttings received at Toc H Central Services indicate that the profile of Toc H was very high around the country during late May and early June. It is a long time since such blanket coverage was received. This, together with the various radio interviews and information broadcasts, all helped to reach out to a wider public.

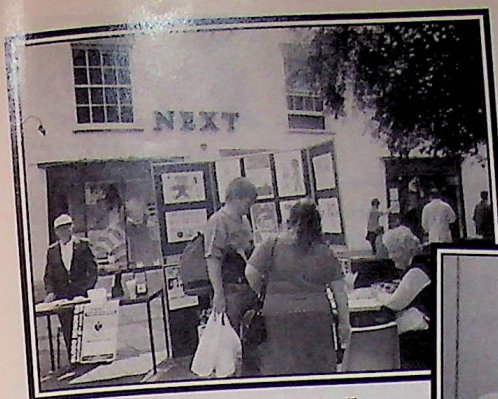
And what of the day itself? Various events were visited by the local Mayor and Mayoress, with some spending time recruiting donors. They clearly enjoyed this involvement if the letters of thanks received by local branches are a guide. An example is the one received from the Mayor and Mayoress of Newport, Gwent, - Lloyd and Sue Turnbull - who wrote, *'Thank you for a lovely morning on 8th June 1996. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and we hope that the event was a great success. With best wishes for the future'*.

At Merry Hill Shopping Centre in the West Midlands, a young lady wearing a sweatshirt with the words "If You Don't Ask You Don't Get Anything" was approached and found herself quite unable to refuse the chance to become a blood donor. Whilst at the same centre Wilf Biggs approached two more young ladies only to find that they only spoke French. As Wilf said, *"I certainly know how to pick 'em"*.

Southport members knit or crochet knee-rugs for people in hospital and had two at their stall, hanging over chair-backs. A woman in a wheelchair paused to look at the stall, though she was too old to be a blood donor. The members then asked her if she would like one of their knitted knee-rugs. She went away absolutely thrilled with her new and unexpected gift. She won't forget Toc H as the

From a letter to John Biggerstaff from Sue Cunningham, National PR and Donor Services Manager, National Blood Authority -

...Do please pass on our very grateful thanks to all concerned. Several Centres commented on the enthusiastic support and hard work contributed by the local Toc H organisers which helped to make the day a great success.



The Taunton stall



The Mayor and Mayoress of Grays support the stall at Lakeside Shopping Centre, Thurrock



Gorleston members with the Carnival Queen



Broadway branch stall with (left) Tommy Trinder, former Warden of Dor Knap



The Keynsham stall with, from the left, Mary Edwards (National Chairman), Daphne Dawes and Pam Staples

blankets have the Toc H logo on one side and 'Love from Toc H' on the reverse.

Imagine the surprise of the BT telephone engineer on visiting Bert Hill's flat in Romiley, Stockport, to repair a fault, only to be signed up as an intending blood donor before he left. How's that for service at home? Well done Bert!

A number of events suggested that it had been easier to persuade women to become donors than men! Most men seemed to have a natural aversion to needles and in spite of gentle persuasion it still proved far more difficult to get them to sign on. At Gorleston, however, they really struck a winner. The men generally retained their normal reserve until the Gorleston Carnival Queen appeared at the stand - then they were like bees round the proverbial honey-pot. In Norwich one man who was asked did suggest that the next pint he donates will be his 100th, having become a donor in the Army when on National Service. The Sergeant asked for volunteers but no one moved! So the next command was, '*The last one to volunteer pays the NAAFI break!*'

At Kidderminster the Wyre Forest members really struck upon a very emotive visual display

idea. They borrowed an incubator and placed a life-size doll in it. This really brought some interest and their results reflected this. Full marks for originality.

The day is over. The names and addresses have been sent to the Regional Blood Collection Centres and, hopefully, Toc H Central Services; follow-up plans are being made; the next job is being planned for. So, little remains other than to express a Toc H vote of thanks to everyone who helped to make this day such a success. It isn't planned to make it an annual, or even regular, event but if you feel that you would like to continue to help the National Blood Authority, then doubtless their Regional Donor Co-ordinators will be glad to hear from you.

The Walsall branch threw down a challenge to Toc H members everywhere when this idea was suggested to the 1994 Central Council. The challenge having been accepted has now been well and truly met. Big or small, your effort proved very worth while and has been very much appreciated by the National Blood Authority. But what now? What's next? What new challenges are there for us to tackle? There must be some; let's find another cause to take out onto our local pavements.

COLSTERDALE

by BADTAG

Staring into the flames of a log fire on a wintry evening, we are searching for inspiration. How do six young people describe these surroundings to encourage others to emulate our experiences here?

Situated high on the the side of a valley in North Yorkshire, The Colsterdale Centre has been converted from a once derelict farm building into a homely and welcoming environment for young and old alike. The Centre has seen some changes and much modernisation just in the last six years since we, (The Barton and District Toc H Action Group), have been coming here.

The Centre offers basic self-catering accommodation for up to twenty-eight people. The four dormitories have recently been carpeted,



making crawling out of a bunk bed at 6am to cook breakfast for twenty noisy children much more bearable. The kitchen is well-equipped even for more experienced cooks, although just one egg-cup

makes soft boiled eggs and soldiers a rare 'egg-sperience'! As well as a real log fire in the well-furnished living room, the Centre can now boast full central heating, even in the showers!

Colsterdale has been an ideal base for our regular hiking expeditions in the Yorkshire Dales. The main attraction of Colsterdale for our group is its remote position - the children we bring here can play for hours in the adjoining field making

as much noise as they like, disturbing nothing but sheep on the surrounding moorland.

During our many stays here, we have undertaken a wide range of activities, such as conservation weekends (including dry stone walling and general maintenance), sponsored walks and social weekends, as well as our children's holidays.

Despite its location it is within easy reach of many places of interest. Our group has, in the past, visited Lightwater Valley, Stump Cross Caverns, Aiskew Children's Farm and Hawes Rope Makers. We have been walking at Brimham Rocks, How Steins Gorge, Aysgarth Falls and Fountains Abbey. We have been on nature trails, been swimming, pony trekking, hiking and played crazy golf, all within easy reach of the Centre. The list is endless!

We hope this has given you a taste of what The Toc H Colsterdale Centre has to offer, and if you've been before, perhaps it's triggered some fond memories of your time there, and if you haven't - why not give it a go? We can certainly recommend it.

GROUPS USING THE CENTRE

- those recovering from mental illness who appreciate the peace and tranquillity of the countryside.
- schools who use the Centre either as a base to explore the Yorkshire Dales or have a programme of outdoor activities, such as orienteering, mountain biking, rambling, nature studies, etc. as well as a number of schools for hearing-impaired children on educational breaks.
- family get-togethers, anniversaries, silver weddings, etc.
- ramblers - there are many spectacular walks from the Centre, depending on capability.
- youth organisations for conferences and outdoor activities.
- church groups on retreats, fellowship weekends, etc.
- Girl Guides/Brownies - well-organised programme of activities.

All details from:

**The Toc H Centre, Colsterdale,
Masham, Ripon, North Yorkshire
HG4 4NN. Tel: 01765 689382**

Readers' Letters

TWINNING BRANCHES

Some readers will have heard that during the Central Council 1995 in the UK, there was a discussion on "twinning" between Toc H Branches.

I seek help to establish the following. First, who already has a Toc H pen-friend in another Branch anywhere in the world? Second, which Toc H Branch corresponds with another anywhere in the world? Third, who would like to be a part of this type of network, either individually or at Branch level?

There are a great number of folk who love both receiving and writing letters. This is not a commercial for our Post Offices, but a suggestion for bringing people closer together as Toc H has for over eighty years. In the short time that I have been a member, I have met people who say that they are not as active now as they used to be and are looking for some sort of Toc H job that they can manage. This might be it! Go on give it a try!

I would love to hear from anyone who would like to see this idea move forward. I will let you all know how interested you and other folk are. As they say

WATCH THIS SPACE!

TOM ELLIOTT

Division 1 Officer, Chaplain/Development
7 Allanfield Grove, Wetherby
West Yorks LS22 4QH

OPTOMETER NEEDED!

I wonder if any readers can help this worthy cause? The North Walsham branch of Toc H has collected spectacles from all over the UK and also Jersey C.I., and over the years we have sent thousands of pairs to underprivileged countries - even as far away as Tonga.

Since the collapse of communism many countries hitherto behind the 'Iron Curtain' are sorely in need of medical supplies, including spectacles, and we have sent many pairs to Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia. Next week I hope to take a consignment to friends in Frinton where they will go on to Romania - fortunately an optician goes on this trip so the spectacles will be allocated efficiently.

However, we have been advised that an optometer would be so useful in the distribution of the spectacles. So I am appealing to your readers. Maybe an optician is reading this and has an optometer surplus to requirements. We would be so grateful to hear from you and would certainly reimburse the donor.

MARGARET BOWLES

Shalom, 7 Simpson Close, North Walsham,
Norfolk NR28 0HZ

IN TOUCH - West Midlands & South Wales Regional Magazine

Due to popular demand - yes, really - we are relaunching this magazine in the autumn. We aim to include news of all kinds to keep members 'IN TOUCH' with one another and informed of Toc H activities.

We need your articles/comments please, nothing is too small, even the odd joke, etc. to fill the page. We hope to make it a 'reader-friendly' magazine with plenty to read and enjoy. Our aim is to spread the message that Good News is news too.

Editor: MARGARET DAVIES

7 Grangewood Court, Woodshires Road
Solihull, West Midlands B92 7DN

TOC H IN BURMA

I was most interested to see the short paragraph and photograph of Toc H in Burma in your April edition. I well remember the Toc H Centre there, although I only spent four to six weeks locally. My stay was short, being withdrawn back to Chittagong in readiness for the invasion of Rangoon. The Club was the least damaged building on the island - you can imagine what the rest were like! If any members of the 19 Air Formation Signals read this, will they please contact me.

NORMAN LURCOCK

"Taksen", Withyham Road
Groombridge, Tunbridge Wells TN3 9QT

FAMILY VALUES

Members of Walsall Branch asked me to write on their behalf to acknowledge the fine quality of July *Point three*. We unanimously endorse Alec Bullivant's letter from South Africa, praising the magazine from 7,000 miles away...

... Family and Youth Concern director Valerie Riches well summarises the fruits of 25 years of experimenting with liberalism buttressed by permissive legislation. I believe Toc H members should consider taking up, individually and collectively, some of the values and concerns we share with FYC. We must persevere in building friendships, offering unselfish service where there are barriers of insecurity, misunderstanding, poor communication, prejudice and so on. IF, however, we compromise the standards that have withstood the generational challenges and scrutiny of time - of 80 years and more - as we have been, we pay severely as a nation and as a movement. FYC is well worth promoting as a catalyst for change and growth, as is Toc H at its best - true to God's standards, unlike the proverbial house built on sand.

PAUL ROGOFF
Birmingham

CRYSTAL PALACE 1936

The 'Letters to Chile' (*Point three*, July) struck a chord. 1936 being my first year on the staff at the age of 15. While being impressed with the crowds and the ceremony at the Crystal Palace, my main memory was carrying large bundles of thick programmes to the various selling points in the grounds. I probably thought it a bit much at 15/- a week!

KEITH REA
Axminster

DENNY'S BLACKPOOL PROJECT

Denny Branch, in Scotland, has for many years run a club for people with learning difficulties. It runs 52 weeks in the year, and currently has 26 members. For the last 15 years the club has gone on holiday together, and included some other people with more severe disability.

John Rintoul, branch chairman, tells us that this year a group of 26 members and nine helpers had a successful week in Blackpool. In some ways it was different from previous holidays. The group did not have the hotel to itself, nor had the hotel been told by the agent that many of the group had special needs, and were scattered through the hotel. Sadly, this led to some other guests checking out, which naturally upset the hotel management, and the helpers. It was a situation in which everyone had to try to understand others'

points of view and, once they did, things improved from then on. The management soon realised that their business might not, after all, be in receivership next week, and a tremendous bond soon formed between the staff, the Denny group, and the other guests.

Many of the club members need full 'one-to-one' care, dressing, washing, shaving, feeding and regular drug administration. No wonder the Denny Toc H members, ably assisted by project volunteers Ian Scott and Catherine McNab, returned home tired, but the success of the project was ensured by their hard work.

During the project, members wore identity badges in case anyone got lost. It included the word Toc H, which prompted many questions, and the group realised the project was also an excellent PR. exercise for the Movement.

CONGRATULATIONS!



We congratulate Cyril Noke, of Cirencester Branch, on his receipt of an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours. This was in recognition of his devoted community work. Among his many contributions to Cirencester life, he started the Rainbow Club (for the elderly) 35 years ago, and has run it for most of the subsequent years; he has done much work for Cancer Research

and its treatment agencies; and he served as verger in the parish church for many years.

80 YEARS OF SERVICE TO SEAFARERS

Edna (Lofty) Culverwell and Lilian Simmonds of Shirehampton Women's Branch are voluntary helpers at the Ecumenical International Seafarers Centre in Avonmouth. They run the shop and the phone-lines two evenings a month - and between them have clocked up nearly 80 years! Edna has been helping for fifty years, apart from a short gap when bringing up a family, and Lilian for 30 years. On March 25th there was a surprise presentation to mark this service, attended by family and many friends. The picture shows Edna (centre) and Lilian (left) with their gifts of crystal wine glasses.



TOC H GERMANY

The Herford kindergarten at 1st (United Kingdom) Armoured Division recently held its annual 'Open Day' and members of the Toc H group ran a stall selling cakes, hot dogs and fresh strawberries with cream. A total of £152.44 profit was made which went towards the capital required to purchase new furniture for the Herford canteen.



This photograph shows some of the members taking part.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Steven Redgrave on achieving his fourth Gold Medal at the Atlanta Olympics. Steven is patron of the Toc H Atlantic Challenge.

BRANCH NEWS • BRANCH NEWS

HARPENDEN BRANCH - 70 NOT OUT!

Sixty people were present on Saturday 15 June 1996 when Harpenden Branch celebrated its 70th Anniversary. Although the Branch did not receive its Lamp until 11 December 1926 from HRH The Prince of Wales at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, we, like the Queen, decided on a June "official" birthday. This proved to be a good decision as the day turned out very warm and sunny.

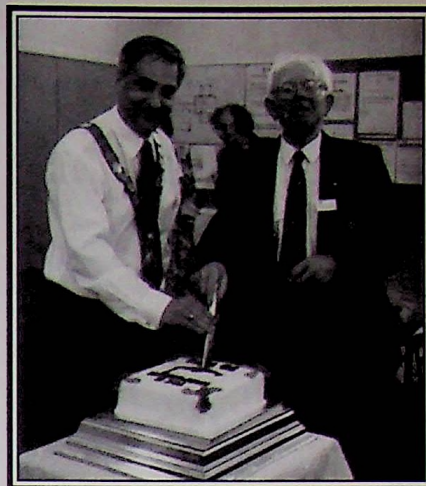
The event was held in St. Nicholas Church Hall, Harpenden, and the Guest Speaker was Mike Lyddiard - who gave a very interesting and thought-provoking talk on Toc H methods and how he sees the difference between Toc H and other charities.

Guests included the Town Mayor of Harpenden and representatives of Churches Together in Harpenden, the UNA (Harpenden Branch), the Harpenden Trust, Harpenden Helping Hand, the Rotary Club of Harpenden, and Harpenden Lions, as well as many members from other Branches.

Guests had the opportunity of looking round exhibits depicting the Branch's history and current activities, and wider Toc H. The present Joint Branch came into being with the merging of the Men's and Women's Branches in the late 70s. The League of Women Helpers in Harpenden was formed in 1929.

After the Welcome by the Branch Chairman, Terry Gray, a finger-buffet lunch was served. Following Mike Lyddiard's talk, the Birthday Cake was cut by Percy English, who joined the Branch in 1927 at the age of 16. The afternoon ended with a Service of Thanksgiving and Rededication.

Harpenden Branch has been especially delighted with the press coverage of its 70th Anniversary with reports appearing in the four free newspapers plus an article by Terry Gray in the community newspaper "Harpenden First".



The cake being cut by Percy English and the Mayor of Harpenden.

CHESHIRE FUNDRAISING WEEKEND 28TH-30TH JUNE

Jennifer Carlon, Development Officer, writes:

Well, the little Welsh village of Brynford didn't know what was happening as a group of volunteers gathered for a training weekend about fundraising! Two groups from the Winsford and the Halton areas spent the weekend experiencing 'Fundraising' with the help and direction of Development Officer, Roger Giles, and BadTag member Kate Moss. Jo Whiteside and I were dragged into the swing of things too!

The main event of the weekend was a Fancy Dress Pub Crawl which took place in Rhyl. The seaside town was full of life and everyone was extremely welcoming - even the local Police when we asked if they could spare a copper!

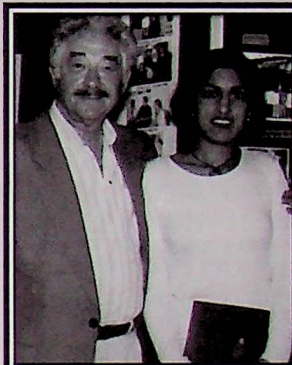
The main lesson to be learnt was that Fundraising can be fun, and when the groups (and Jo) got into the swing of things, they left Kate and Roger wondering what they could tell them

that they didn't already know! The event was very successful, raising £280 which was divided between the two groups to be used for the Cheshire Families Under Pressure Scheme locally.

I'm sure Roger and Kate took home some more 'handy hints', and Jo's dog Sandy was happy to get her spot by the fire back! Both groups went home feeling very excited about fundraising, which I hope will lead to some successful events in the future. Roger Giles even pledged to do a Bungee Jump for the Cheshire Scheme! So we will sign Roger up in the near future - WATCH THIS SPACE!



On the fancy dress pub crawl - left to right: Jenny Carlon, Roger Giles, Kate Moss.



EastEnders actor Harry Landies with Fozia Parveen, at the Toc H stand at an exhibition run by the Tower Hamlets Community Opportunity Forum. Toc H has played a key role in the Forum over the past few years. Fozia Parveen was the event organiser. The photograph was taken by Dilu Naser, who originally met staff member John Burgess when John visited his home during a visit to Bangladesh in 1984.

BRANCH NEWS • BRANCH NEWS

BEHIND THE SCENES



Tim Day, Head of Development

In this fifth look at Toc H 'behind the scenes' we focus again on the work at Wendover. In order to stress its role of supporting and servicing our membership and staff 'out there in the field', the C.E.C. has recently agreed that, in future, it should be known as Toc H Central Services. This article, (together with the earlier one in July *Point three*) outlines the new shape of these services.

Development

Head of Development:
Tim Day

PA to Head of Development:
Janet Graves

This is the smallest Central Services Department. The Head of Development has responsibility for all Divisional Development Officers and externally funded development staff. Working closely with the Development sub-Committee and new Divisional Development Teams, the Head of Development is responsible for ensuring that the C.E.C.'s development policies are implemented.

Consulting as appropriate, he is also responsible for negotiating all statutory funding for Toc H work. He also carries responsibility for contact with Development staff and their training and personal growth.



*Ian Pearce,
National Fundraising Officer*

National Fundraising Officer: *Ian Pearce*
Fundraising Assistant: *Julie Murray*

Are responsible for developing and implementing our national fundraising strategy, with special emphasis on trusts, companies, major sources of funds, e.g. National Lottery, direct marketing, legacies and national fundraising campaigns. The target is to achieve income to a level of ten times the department's costs. There is a link with the Divisional Fundraisers via the Director.

National Events Co-ordinator: *John Biggerstaff*

This is a wide-ranging role, with responsibility for co-ordinating major Toc H events involving members and volunteers. Responsibilities include servicing the Development Sub-Committee, supporting the Talbot House Association, and co-ordinating the Project programme. He may set up *ad hoc* groups in support of special events and activities. He reports to the Director.

TOC H Central Services

There are four departments now which make up Central Services: Support Services, Finance and Properties, Development, and Directorate. We look at the second two of these in this issue.

The Directorate

The Director: *Mike Lyddiard*

The National Chaplain: *The Revd Alan Johnson*

PA to the Director: *Margaret Winstanley*

PA to the National Chaplain: *Sue Pells*

The Director and National Chaplain have a joint responsibility for ensuring Central Council and CEC decisions are implemented. They have overall responsibility for general forward planning of work, and for the well-being and management of the Toc H staff. Both have responsibility for making external contacts for the Movement, together with development of the Movement's overall communication strategy and first-line contact with the media. They are accountable to, and report to, the CEC, of which they are full members. The Director, together with his PA, services the Personnel Sub-Committee.

The Director is additionally responsible for both centrally and field-based fundraising and general public relations, and also for maintaining contact with the Movement's Trustees and other lay leaders.

The National Chaplain is additionally responsible for the maintenance and communication of the values, ethos and principles of Toc H. This includes the management of divisional chaplains and communication with branch and other chaplains.

Communications Officer: *vacant*

Has responsibility for developing and maintaining Toc H's communication strategies, both internal and external. The post holder is responsible for generating all general publicity, information and educative materials including *Point three*, and the Annual Review. Accountable to the Director.

Tributes

We announce, with regret, the death of the following members:

APRIL: Marie D'Amour, Poperinge

MAY: Fred Leese, Charlton / Frederick Nobbs, Late Norwich / Doris Wells, Central Branch

JUNE: Reginald Coates, Chippenham / Horace Mitchell, Cavendish District / Florence Ross, Late Belfairs

JULY: K Blunden, Ilford & Seven Kings / Albert Bowyer, S E Hants District
Douglas 'David' Worth, Gloucestershire District

NOT PREVIOUSLY RECORDED:

Catherine Anderson, Bramley / Eva Armstrong, Nailsea / R J Brocklehurst, Wivelshire District
Frances Chandler, Walter Chandler, Isle of Wight District / Dorothy Harris, Medway & Sheppey District
Margaret Hopgood, Haywain District / 'Allen' Howard, East Lancs / Ray Hughes, Llandrindod Wells
John Humphreys, Cleveland District / Mary Martin, Wolds District / John McGregor, Southampton
'Selwyn' Morgan, Glamorgan District / Thomas Nielson, Avon District
Arthur Newby, Barrow-on-Humber / Sidney Pritchard, S E Hants District
A Sherwood, Late Biggleswade / Lyn Smith, Biggleswade

Margaret Hopgood, who died on May 26th 1996, had been a member of Clacton Toc H for over 20 years. Very poor health during the last 10 years had prevented her from working for the Toc H she loved. She will be sadly missed by those who found her to be such a loving and caring lady. **PB**

We are sorry to report that Florrie Ross died on June 23rd. She was a long-standing member of Toc H, starting at Ilford Branch and then moving to Clacton. Her final move was to Leigh-on-Sea where she joined Belfairs (Women's) Branch. She held office as District Secretary for a few years and finally was Secretary of the Branch until it closed earlier this year. We give thanks for her life. **KK**

With great sadness Biggleswade Ladies Branch report the sudden and untimely death of Lyn Smith, a long-standing and valued member of the branch. Lyn did not enjoy good health but was always cheerful and helpful. She will be greatly missed by her friends in Toc H. Our condolences are extended to her mother, sister, and family. **GM**

Morecambe Toc H recently mourned the death of Florence Wilkinson, aged 93. Although Florence was unable to attend meetings at Morecambe branch rooms, she received Point three until recently. Florence was a founder member of the former women's branch and helped in many ways with hospital visits in Morecambe and Lancaster, and assisting with parties for blind people, the elderly and the housebound, and various fundraising events. She was a member of the Mothers Union at the former St Lawrence's Church and, when it closed down, transferred to Holy Trinity Parish Church, alongside her late husband Albert, who was a warden and a pilot of Morecambe Toc H. Florence will be greatly missed, and we give thanks for her life and service. **BC**

We are sad to hear of the death of Canon Peter Raban. Peter was a teacher in East Anglia before the War, but while in the army in Italy met Toc H through its welfare work, and then joined the staff in 1946. He served as Area Secretary in East Anglia, and then in Liverpool, before leaving in 1952 to attend Chichester Theological College. His subsequent ministry was entirely in the Winchester Diocese.

Horace Stanley Mitchell died in June, aged 84. Stan had been a stalwart member of Bakewell Branch, at least since 1969. He became Treasurer of Cavendish District until four years ago when he had a stroke, and continued as a member of Cavendish District Branch. **GE**

Meirion White, a long-standing member of Corwen Joint Branch, died in March. He had represented the Branch on various committees, and for a number of years was Chairman of our Carnival Committee until he was incapacitated by a stroke. He was a past Chairman of Glyndwr District Council and worked hard to improve the lot of the local community. His wife, Mair, is also a member of the Branch and she is continuing the good work he started. **LR**

Honiton Branch was saddened by the death on May 29th of one of its stalwarts, George Charleston, aged 90, who had been a member from its early days. Although ill health had prevented him from taking an active part in branch affairs for about two years, George remained interested in all our news and activities. He was Branch Chairman on several occasions and, in the 1980s, Vice Chairman for seven years. Throughout his long membership he was faithful in attendance at meetings, and would "leap with joy to any task for others", not only in Toc H but also in the community. His death has caused us great sadness, but it is with pride that we now number him as one of our Elder Brethren. **JL**

**The Parish Church and
The Community College,
Bishop's Castle, Shropshire**

**12 B.C.
CHARITY WALK
Saturday 19th October 1996**

A Charity Walk of 12 miles (can be shorter if you wish) around the beautiful countryside of Bishop's Castle, Shropshire. An ideal way to raise funds for your club, charity, school or organisation.



Details from:
**Peter Norton, 5 The Ridge,
Bishop's Castle, Shropshire.
SY9 5AB. Tel: 01588 638118**

**TOC H and the
OTHONA COMMUNITY**

present

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

**Friday 15th to Sunday 17th
November 1996**

An opportunity to explore personal spirituality and experience the community of Othona in Dorset.

Led by Adrian Dudman and Alan Johnson.

Cost £50 per person

To book, please write to:

**The Warden,
The Othona Community
Coast Road, Burton Bradstock
nr Bridport, Dorset DT6 4RN**

**COLSTERDALE
OPEN DAY**

**SATURDAY 12th OCTOBER '96
12.00 Noon - 4.00pm**

Come and enjoy the peace and quiet of Colsterdale in the Autumn. Renew old acquaintances, make new friends.

**12.30pm onwards Buffet Lunch
3.00pm Charity Auction**

Please bring something for the Auction in aid of the Colsterdale Building Fund.

Surprise entertainment on the Day!

Details from: Keith Crocker,
The Toc H Centre, Colsterdale, nr Ripon,
North Yorkshire, HG4 4NN.
Tel: 01765 689382

NEW TEES GROUP

are holding a

**MARATHON RELAY
SPONSORED WALK**

**From MIDDLESBROUGH
To TOC H WENDOVER**

STARTING ON MON 2ND SEPT '96

The purpose of the Walk is to raise money for Family Purse and our Local Group. Any monies raised in your area will be split three ways with a third going to your goodselves.

It is hoped that your Branch will help us.

Details from:

**Mr Roger K Howlett
Toc H New Tees Group
7 Zetland Road, MIDDLESBROUGH
Cleveland TS1 1EH. 01642 230982**

Ken Prideaux-Brune's new book is the story of Gualter's work at Prideaux House over the past 30 years. (See page 3.)

It's called

**ANY PROBLEM
IS NO PROBLEM**

and can be ordered from:
**Prideaux House, 10 Church Crescent,
London E9 7DL
Price: £5 plus p&p 50p**

COLLECTING BOXES

We now have a stock of hand-held plastic collecting boxes.

- Box, Toc H label & 4 seals £1.80 each
- I.D. Cards £0.05p each
- Lapel Sticker £0.55p each
- Postage & Packing £1.00

Please send your order to:

**Toc H Central Services, 1 Forest Close,
Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT
Tel: 01296 623911 Fax: 01296 696137**